



State of Tennessee Department of Children's Services

Administrative Policies and Procedures: 31.6

Subject: Program Operations Closed Case File Disposition

Supersedes: DCS 31.6, 04/01/02

Local Policy: No

Local Procedures: Yes

Training Required: No

Applicable Practice Model Standard(s): Yes

Approved by:

Effective date: 04/01/02

Revision date: 01/01/04

Application

To All Department of Children's Services Regional Assistant Commissioners, Home County Case Managers, Residential Case Managers, Team Leaders, Team Coordinators, Regional Administrators, and Records Clerks/Coordinators

Authority: TCA 10-7-301, 37-5-106-107

Policy

Each DCS region/local office shall maintain paper records of inactive/closed Home County Case Manager files, Foster Parent files, probation files and diversion case files for a specified period of time based on the records series type. The files shall be destroyed in accordance with established policies and procedures that pertain to confidential child records. This policy does not apply to any information contained in a TN KIDS electronic file.

Procedures

A. Identification of Inactive/closed files

1. In accordance with DCS policy [7.13, Records Disposition Authorization Development and Review Process](#), Regional Administrators must ensure that each region has a uniform record disposition procedure and closed file tracking system of paper files as described in *Section D*.
2. One year from the date of implementation of this policy, Regional Administrators shall ensure that all inactive/closed files in the region have been labeled and/or destroyed according to this policy.

3. When a file is designated as inactive/closed the Case Manager, Records Clerk/Coordinator or designee shall document in a consistent manner in the file, the appropriate Records Disposition Authorization (RDA) number and projected disposition date according to the following record series:
- a) **RDA2873 Closed DYD Youth Master Files** are to be cut off September 30, 1993, then maintained in State Records Center and various DCS locations until September 30, 2009 or until the youth's 29th birthday; then destroyed. These are juvenile justice youth records, including probation and diversion case files, formerly maintained by the Department of Youth Development (DYD), that closed from January 1, 1920 to September 30, 1993 which were not prepped or microfilmed.
 - b) **RDA2877-Closed Foster Parent Files** are to be cut off at the end of each calendar year then, maintain in agency 25 yrs; then destroy. These are closed files containing information, i.e., medical, social, financial, training, criminal background checks, etc., on foster homes or contract agencies that no longer provide services to agency clients.
 - c) **RDA2878-Closed DCS-Home County (Social Services) Case Manager Files** are to be cut off at the youth's 21st birthday, then maintained in the agency 7 years, then destroyed. These are "original" case paper files, including demographics, assessment, treatment, permanency plan, case recordings/notes, disciplinary reports, placement, court order, photographs and other miscellaneous information for each social service child that is no longer in the physical custody, control or supervision of the state.
 - d) **RDA2879-Closed DCS-Home County (Juvenile Justice) Case Manager Files** are to be cut off at child's 22nd birthday then, maintain in agency 7 years; then destroy. These are "original" case paper files, including demographics, assessment, treatment, permanency plan, case recordings/notes, disciplinary reports, placement, court order, photographs and other miscellaneous information for each juvenile justice child that is no longer in the physical custody, control or supervision of the state.
 - e) **RDA2882-Closed DYD Youth-Miscellaneous Master Files** are to be cut off at the youth's 22nd birthday, then destroyed. These are juvenile justice records, including

probation and diversion case files, except for medical and education records, formerly maintained by DYD that closed from October 1, 1993 to June 30, 1996 and are currently stored at various DCS locations. This RDA replaces RDAs 390 and 2241.

- B. Re-opened files** If a child returns to DCS custody, staff shall transfer all inactive/closed file record information to the active case file.
- C. Identification of protected health information (PHI) files** PHI records and databases will be destroyed in accordance with federal and state regulations. Refer to DCS policy [HIPAA #3, Uses and Disclosures of Client or Participant Protected Health Information](#) for documentation requirements regarding the designated records set and accounting of disclosures.
- D. Method of record disposal** Approved methods for destroying confidential paper record information are shredding, burning, and acid bath recycling. Electronic records will be irreversibly destroyed in accordance with state approved methods.
- E. Disposal documentation**
1. Records designated for destruction, regardless of media, will be destroyed and tracked by the region/local office.
 2. Records destroyed prior to the effective date of this policy will be documented according to DCS Policy [9.4, Confidential Child-Specific Records Information](#).
 3. Eligible case files shall be destroyed on or before June 30th of each year and documented annually.
 4. Disposal documentation for child/youth files should include the following:
 - a) Child's name
 - b) Child's birth date
 - c) Child's social Security number
 - d) Applicable RDA number
 - e) Estimated volume (cu. ft.)
 - f) Disposal method
 - g) Destruction date (month/day/year)
 - h) List name and signature of staff supervising and

witnessing the record destruction

5. Disposal documentation for foster parent files should include the following:
 - a) Foster home/agency's name
 - b) Applicable RDA number
 - c) Estimated volume (cu. ft.)
 - d) Disposal method
 - e) Destruction date (month/day/year)
6. If destruction services are contracted, the DCS facility will specify the method of destruction, note the time that will elapse prior to destroying the records, identify contractor safeguards against breaches in confidentiality, secure an indemnity from loss due to unauthorized disclosure, and obtain a written proof of destruction.
7. Prepare Form GS-0989, *Certificate of Records Destruction* and forward to departmental records officer.
8. Records destruction information shall be included in the regional annual records holding report.

Forms

GS-0989 Department of General Services Certificate of Destruction

Collateral Documents

RDA2873, Closed DYD Youth Master Files

RDA2877, Closed Foster Parent Files

RDA2878, Closed DCS-Home County (Social Services) Case Manager Files

RDA2879, Closed DCS-Home County (Juvenile Justice) Case Manager Files

RDA2882, Closed DYD Youth-Miscellaneous Master Files

Standards

DCS Practice Model Standard -7-102A

Glossary

| <i>Term</i> | <i>Definition</i> |
|----------------------------------|--|
| <i>Case Recordings</i> | The ongoing chronological narrative written by a case manager in a case file that serves to document each contact or to document any activity related to the case. |
| <i>Closed case file</i> | Records that were maintained according to legal and/or organizational requirements that are eligible for disposition due to the termination of the physical custody, control, supervision and/or support services of a child by the Department of Children's Services. |
| <i>Disposition</i> | An action taken, such as transferring, purging, destroying, microfilming, archiving, etc., regarding records that have reached the end of their retention period. File disposition normally occurs on the 21 st birthday for a social service child and the 22nd birthday for a juvenile justice child. |
| <i>Inactive case file</i> | Records that may have been closed but are not yet ready for disposition. |